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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/EX AND AF/E

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TAGS: [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [ER](#)  
SUBJECT: ISAIAS AND THE CIA

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for reason 1.4(d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: President Isaias Afwerki's interview with Reuters appears to be the ramblings of a paranoiac. He blames imagined CIA conspiracies for all of Eritrea's manifest woes and holds himself up as a hero who has stymied this "powerful opposition." In addition to calling into question his lucidity, interviews such as this poison the relationship between the United States and common Eritrean citizens, who are fed a daily diet of this claptrap. Isaias may also be attempting to tarnish all who oppose his dictatorial rule as being CIA lackeys. A portion of the Reuters May 20 interview with Isaias appeared in the government-controlled Eritrean Profile on July 18. Excerpts appear below in unedited form to give the reader a sense of the tone, language, and substance of Isaias' public statements.

¶2. (SBU) FAILED EFFORTS TO MISLEAD THE DIASPORA  
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"I would not like to invite the CIA to be party in this country. We have a very powerful opposition and that is the CIA. They buy people and can organize and finance them and have one million websites. They continue to fund but the last 18 years or basically the last 10 years, they have failed to impress upon the Diaspora."

¶3. (SBU) SOURCE OF OPPOSITION DISINFORMATION  
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"We have traitors in our history and it is a long story and it is very natural in any community. Any outside force could come and buy someone and there are smaller and a handful willing to be sold in the market. You can give these people the finance they require, give them advanced information technology, organize websites for them and Langley would be the headquarters for organizing all this; coming up with all the disinformation, the news about this government, terrorism, human rights abuse, religious problems. This is an illusion and is probably the problem of the operatives. I said we have a very powerful opposition called the CIA."

¶4. (SBU) THE DIASPORA CONTINUES ITS SUPPORT  
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"The Diaspora is making its contributions in this aspect and that is one of the headaches for the CIA. At one time, during the Clinton Administration, they wanted to control the remittances to this country and try to harass the Diaspora to not send any money to families here. In such a situation in a bid to distance the Diaspora people from making contributions a CIA agent or station chief will come and say, 'so and so who is the son of so and so is qualified engineer, he is being neglected by the government to participate'.

Some of these people they mention were not even talented, they don't even have any talent. They have been bought or compromised for their own personal problems and used to give the impression that there is an opposition. There is not opposition outside the CIA, and it is an opposition in the minds and the illusions of the CIA."

15. (SBU) ANTI-ERITREAN FACTORIES IN LANGLEY  
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"I can imagine and see all these websites and how they leak information there, sometimes latest and current information fabricated from the factories in Langley and leaked into websites as if there were innocently brought in there."

16. (SBU) MISLEADING THE SECURITY COUNCIL ABOUT SOMALIA  
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"A station officer who has been here and moved to Djibouti, Addis and to different cities and countries will be having his networks and contacts organizing without him being seen and tell people certain fabricated facts to create an aura or environment of tension. Recently we have been discussion about the UN Security Council Resolution. I don't know whether they know the mechanics but the source was on CIA operative in the region. And he would say; 'there are reports about Eritrea supplying the Islamists in Somalia with weapons.'"

17. (SBU) ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION  
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"There is no freedom of expression for agents and no one can allow them that. You can't allow for an agent recruited by the CIA to have the freedom of speech because they have already compromised this freedom and sold it for nothing. It is as simple as that. There is no freedom for CIA agents in this country and any where."

18. (SBU) ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION  
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"And that is what they dream; sitting anywhere in Nairobi or elsewhere one operative of the CIA would like to see the Christians fighting Christians; Catholics fighting Protestants or Orthodox fighting Protestants and Christians fighting Muslims. This is a dream for them."

19. (SBU) THEY CONTROL MANY THINGS; THEY CONTROL POWER  
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"I was excited about Nancy Pelosi's statement recently, these people are hypocrites, and they have been telling the Congress lies. They have been telling their own officials about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. They have been torturing people everywhere; they would like to see the suffering of human being and manipulating these sufferings. I call it sadism; it is very sick. Unfortunately they control many things; they control power."

110. (SBU) WHO IS BEHIND HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS?  
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"Who are those human rights organizations in the first place? Who pays them? Who appoints them for the job? These are very obvious thing to who finances a certain operation or an individual formally or informally. Who has the money transferring to their account, invisible account some where?"

111. (SBU) POWERFUL BUT INEPT OPPOSITION  
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"It is an open secret to me because it is not a question of human rights or religious rights and so on but it is part of a fight of a powerful opposition I mentioned earlier and this powerful opposition has not succeeded in achieving anything."